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ABSTRACT

Motivated by education reform and state-mandated inservice training, New Jersey's Montclair Public School District created a staff development model that uses teachers as resources for their own professional growth. This model utilizes the expertise of an elementary math, intermediate language arts, and secondary science teacher in the formation of a resource team of professional developers. As teachers on special assignment, the resource team works closely with key administrative personnel in areas of curriculum, parental involvement, staff development, and overall student achievement. This paper shares the results of the initial phase of this new model of professional staff development in the Montclair Public Schools. Montclair is a magnet school system with a highly diverse student population of 6,000 students. A historical perspective is provided which describes the process for fostering collegiality and implementing innovative pedagogical practices in the middle level classroom. This model represents a paradigm shift. One of the reasons the model has been successful is because of the team diversity across grade level and subject. This diversity has helped cultivate continuity and eliminate gaps common to many isolated models of staff development. Sample flyers, presentation overheads, and supplementary resources are attached. (Author/SM)

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In-site Insight: A Look at Professional Development in Montclair, New Jersey

The Middle School Magnet Grant of the Montclair Public Schools
Fall, 2000

Paper developed as a result of a presentation at the
National Middle School Association 2000 Annual Meeting (St. Louis, Missouri)

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ABSTRACT

Motivated by education reform and state-mandated in-service training, our district has created a staff development model that uses teachers as resources for their own professional growth. This model utilizes the expertise of an elementary math, an intermediate language arts and a secondary science teacher in the formation of a resource team of professional developers. As "teachers on special assignment", the resource team works closely with key administrative personnel in areas of curriculum, parental involvement, staff development and overall student achievement. The goal of this paper is to share results of the initial phase of this new model of professional staff development in the Montclair Public Schools. Located about 12 miles northwest of New York City, Montclair is a magnet school system with a highly diverse student population of 6000 students. A historical perspective will be provided describing the process for fostering collegiality and for the implementation of innovative pedagogical practices in the middle level classroom. This model represents a paradigm shift; we believe that one of the reasons why this model has been successful is largely due to team diversity across grade level and subject. This diversity has helped cultivate continuity and eliminate gaps common to many isolated models of staff development.

Introduction

The United States Department of Education has cited several ways in which districts can help diminish the gap between student success and student failure in their May, 1998 publication "Building School Capacity: Systemic Support for the Process of Change". Among them is the ideal method of "effectively mobilizing district resources to support school change"; this has been a major point of focus by the Montclair Public Schools. The goal of mobilizing district resources—fiscal, human, technical and social--has been the foundation upon which the Middle School Magnet Grant (MSG) rests. The middle school represents the choice laboratory for exploring questions regarding student success, appropriate curricula and education reform. As a place where adolescents emerge from a sea of emotions, the middle school has the potential of being the beginning or the end of critical learning for many students. As cited by James Beane, John Arnold suggested five guiding principles for developing responsive curriculum to address the needs of the middle school. "Trusting the instincts of experienced teachers to plan and carry out the curriculum" (Beane 30) is one of those very important factors. In this way, the Montclair Public Schools organization has validated its teachers as a resource. The MSG constructed a team of teachers to carry out the vision of the grant. This team consists of an elementary level math specialist*, an intermediate level humanities specialist and a secondary level science specialist. The premise upon which the Montclair Public Schools as an organization continues to grow relies on the notion that the distribution of all of its resources will support systemic change in meaningful ways.

The Middle School Magnet Grant of the Montclair Public Schools is a three-year grant awarded through the US Department of Education as a part of the Federal Magnet Schools Assistance Program (MSAP). This $1.5 million grant was developed to afford the Montclair Board of

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* The term *specialist* is used here to indicate lead/master teachers in each indicated subject area. This designation is based upon demonstrated classroom leadership in particular content. A committee of middle school principals and other district administration interviewed the MSG team of curriculum resource teachers. Each resource teacher was asked to provide samples of student work, lesson plans and a statement of personal educational philosophy as part of the interviewing process.

Education and the Montclair Public Schools the opportunity to *focus* on a) improving the performance of middle school students, b) strengthening the instructional practices of teachers, c) refining the magnet themes, and d) enhancing the overall quality of instruction. It is important to emphasize the context of the foci: the middle school. Middle level achievement is a critical issue for the nation. By setting parameters for this grant that espouse best administrative and pedagogical practices, intermediate level concerns are well addressed.

For many years, researchers have upheld the notion that early adolescent school children learn best when their academic pursuits are aligned with their social goals. For this reason, strategies such as differentiated instruction, interdisciplinary/thematic lesson planning, problem-based learning and cooperative learning have been upheld as the paradigms to be used when addressing middle level learners. When coupled with house structure, middle schools that effectively use these strategies have had remarkable success. Montclair has organized its curriculum around these ideas in the formation of its magnet school structure. Elementary and middle schools are all magnet schools with parental choice. Montclair has had magnet schools since 1977. The demographic composition of Montclair is an important factor in why magnet schools work in Montclair.

Description of Montclair (N.J)

- Located 12 miles west of New York City.
- 6,000+ students in
  - 1 high school
  - 3 middle schools (6 - 8)
  - 7 elementary schools (K - 5; K is full day)
  - Developmental Learning Center for 4- to 12-year-olds with multiple handicaps
  - 1 semi-private pre-K center (3 & 4-year-olds; full day)
- Richly diverse community and student population
- Most classified students in regular education classrooms with in-class support
- Average class size: 26 students

- Each elementary class has a part-time teaching assistant
- Significant family involvement
- Site-based management

Three Montclair Middle Schools

www.montclair.k12.nj.us

- Glenfield Middle School
  - Arts & Humanities Magnet
  - Performing arts theme
- Mt. Hebron Middle School
  - Science/Technology Magnet
  - Environmental theme
- Renaissance Middle School
  - Lotus-model* Magnet
  - World as the community for a community of learners

*The Lotus-model is a conception that the MSG team developed to explain the Renaissance school. The lotus represents many things in ancient culture, especially eloquence, growth and truth; it often appears in modern architectural design and imagery. The Renaissance School faculty, staff and students often use the lotus plant as a symbol in the same way that many schools use animal icons to represent their mascots.

The Council for Policy Research in Education cites as one of the guiding principles for teacher professional development a need to "offer intellectual, social and emotional engagement with ideas, materials and colleagues. If teachers are to teach for deep understanding, they must be intellectually engaged in their disciplines and work regularly with others in their field". Furthermore in order to

improve professional development, teacher roles must be strengthened. "The failure to use exemplary teachers to lead professional development wastes talent, increases costs, and contributes to the division between research and practice". In an effort to meet the professional development needs of Montclair's teachers, the model developed by the Montclair Public Schools has the potential to meet the directives of current research while empowering teachers to safely move toward collegiality and pedagogical fortitude. The MSG model of staff development is best conceptualized as a matrix. A team of teachers from within the district serves as the primary source of staff developers. This team is multidisciplinary (one elementary math teacher, one intermediate level language arts teacher and one secondary science teacher) and spans each of the three educational levels served by the Montclair Public Schools district. The team meets regularly with principle administrative staff who can affect school policy and ensure school change. Professional development activities also have an organized structure. It is the intent of the MSG to model behaviors for teachers while they serve in the capacity of staff developer. Workshops and seminars often follow a format that could easily be applied to any classroom context.

Standard Workshop Agenda

- **Anchor Activity ("sponge"):** introductory exercise that models desired behaviors/skills; evaluates prior knowledge or poses questions for discussion
- **Content/feedback loop:** discussion of anchoring activity that allows for collegial exchange, question/answering and personal introductions
- **Pedagogical technique:** presentation of "new" learning
- **Closing:** summary of workshop events/discussion of future work
- **Evaluation/feedback:** formal Lichert-scale evaluation of workshop

This model is becoming a dynamic part of the way our middle schools evolve. Professional development activities are largely conducted within the building, during the workday and often with students being the immediate beneficiaries of the on-site/in-site training. Peer coaching and

collaboration are a part of the vision of professional development in Montclair, ushering in a paradigm shift from more traditional practices. "Embedding more professional development in the workplace so it is more closely related to teachers' work experience" has also been cited by the CPRE as a goal to be addressed by policymakers in the implementation of an improved professional development model for teacher empowerment and renewal.

Curriculum work

"One of the most important goals of middle level education is to have early adolescents make significant strides in personal and social development as they become young adults." (Caissy 185) Because adolescence represents a critical transition between concrete and abstract thinking skills, it is important that as curriculum lead teachers we emphasize optimal patterns for pedagogy. Strategies that provide opportunities for collaboration and intellectual engagement, hands-on activities that transition into formal exercises while proffering variety, options as well as fun have been our vantage point in professional development. Interdisciplinary unit planning, brain-based instruction and differentiated instruction have been the underpinnings for our work with teachers one-on-one and in workshop settings. In his work, *A Middle School Curriculum: From Rhetoric to Reality*, James Beane highlights several points that should inform the ways that middle level education should be conducted. The most provocative ideals presented by Beane address democracy in education (a student's freedom to choose what s/he learns), honoring diversity (individual—learning styles, gender-specific and age-specific as well as those that are more global—ethnicity, religion, race), and significance (personal and social that is lifelike and lively). "Those who work at the middle level enter into the lives of early adolescents for a relatively brief period of time…The curriculum in these years ought to center on powerful themes that enlighten the search for self and social meaning…Significant learning in real life involves having experience which are integrated into our present scheme of meanings about ourselves and our world so that those meaning are refined, extended and expanded." (Beane 20)

One of the goals of professional development in Montclair is to address teaching and learning in light of critical pedagogy: that which will motivate, stimulate and **engage** both teacher and student. *Engaged pedagogy*, a term discussed in bell hooks' *Teaching to Transgress*, transcends the boundaries established (perpetuated) by low-level teaching/thinking practices and represents the ideal paradigm for professional development. "Engaged pedagogy necessarily values student expression." (hooks 20) It empowers teachers first so that they may empower their students to discover meaning in every learning exchange. (I call this the "oxygen model": in case of emergency, put on your mask before administering assistance to the children!)

Elements of Engaged Pedagogy germane to middle-level instruction:

- The classroom as a community—honoring diversity
- The classroom as a community of voices—honoring democracy
- Narrative teaching & learning—honoring the legacy and evolution of the adolescent "know it all" through anecdotal teaching

To operationalize the concept of engaged pedagogy, teachers with whom we have worked have developed lesson plans and unit plans that have incorporated these principles. The Montclair Public Schools philosophy of magnet schools supports the notion of interdisciplinary, project-based instruction that is thematic and based upon problem-solving skill development. Examples of this work are available upon request through each building and/or teacher.

Our growth

Professional development for teachers must be self-actualizing. It must provide opportunities for teachers to do and be more than they may have envisioned for themselves at the beginning of their careers. Above all, it must affirm that teachers are professionals on the same level as any other degree-carrying

individual. Expectations of continued education for teachers must be a part of this adopted view. A precedent for articulation, collaboration and invention in the schools is necessary. Teachers must be given opportunities for dialogue among colleagues across grade levels and disciplines that may lead to improved curricula and greater student achievement. The MSG model has afforded its resource teachers professional growth experiences that have brought tremendous benefit to the district in ways that are cost-effective and time-efficient.

MSG Growth table

Internal	*External*	*Grant (in-grant) directives*	*Mentoring*
Technology *	Interaction with publishing companies	Grant evaluation process	District-level administration*
Peer collaboration within team*	Content-specific training	Peer feedback	Building (school) Administration
Peer collaboration with classroom teachers*	Pedagogical/curriculum strategies (e.g., Differentiated Instruction, Brain-compatible teaching/learning)	Grant writing	Professional/research-based industries*
District support system*	Professional association memberships	Federal magnet grant conference	Colleagues from other disciplines/locations

*Explanation provided below

Internal growth

**Technology*

Resource teachers were each issued laptop computers (iBook). As classroom teachers, the everyday use of computers had been limited; laptops afforded us with a tremendous amount of freedom and flexibility to document information, access the internet for research and chronicle the proceedings of impromptu meetings rather quickly. Each resource teacher has her own district e-mail account and has had training in software used to support the district database. The resource teachers developed their skills in desktop publishing by developing press releases, flyers and a website (Maggie in the Middle: http://familyeducation.com/nj/middleschoolmagnetgrant); these served as the primary sources of internal communication for our district.

*Peer collaboration

> "The professional isolation of teachers limits access to new ideas and better solutions, drives stress inward to fester and accumulate, fails to recognize and praise success, and permits incompetence to exist and persist to the detriment of students, colleagues and the teachers themselves. Isolation allows, even if it does not always produce, conservatism and resistance to innovation in teaching." (Fullan 34)

The above statement about the teaching profession is a true, difficult and uncomfortable sketch of what can happen in most classrooms. It is an unfortunate by-product of the departmentalized structures of modern schools. Peer collaboration is a potentially healing salve to this open wound called isolation. The MSG team model has brought together teachers across disciplines and grade levels to engage in the process of teaching and learning in the middle school. The value of this construction is immense. The strength of the ideas generated about middle level curriculum as a result of this multi-level approach is couched in collegiality and camaraderie. We trust each other and respect the expertise each of us brings to this conversation. Our colleagues who remain in the classroom also appreciate the diversity of the MSG team. Sixth grade teachers for example can be a part of the feedback loop through Barbara (elementary math specialist) while an eighth grade teacher may want to gain some insight into the high school curriculum through Joy (secondary science specialist). A new teacher to the middle level classroom may want to know appropriate strategies for classroom management or thematic lesson planning that would be specific to adolescent learners; it is often difficult for freshman teachers to build relationships with veteran teachers who are not their direct mentors. Having a teacher whose primary interests include writing across the curriculum and interdisciplinary instruction, Renee (intermediate humanities specialist), can be a welcome in-house resource. A middle school teacher may want to pattern their classroom or a lesson more like those experienced in an elementary environment—characteristically active, with learning centers, differentiated learning paradigms that are informed by various learning styles and intelligences. All of these are case-in-point results of the support system the MSG team has created for its middle schools.

District support system

The Montclair Public Schools organization has benefited from its community as one of its primary resources. There is a strong movement in Montclair toward volunteerism. Parents, local college coeds, firemen, police officers and citizens frequently serve the Montclair Public Schools through volunteer activities. As part of the growth of the MSG resource teachers, we have also volunteered alongside these community agents in tutoring programs, information sessions and district reform committees to affect what happens in our classrooms. The Montclair Fund for Educational Excellence (MFEE) is a grant-awarding body within the district. The MFEE awards grants to teachers to support their own professional development, to encourage innovative ideas in the classroom and promote academic excellence for teachers and students. MSG teachers have received awards to support attendance at national conferences. Additionally, the Montclair Public Schools has its own in-service component for its teachers. The MSG teachers have benefited from district in-service both as workshop facilitators and workshop participants.

Mentoring

District administration

Michael Fullan in his book *Change Forces* describes the necessity for teachers to become change agents in the educational quagmire. As part of this transition from isolationist behaviors common among teachers, teachers must commit themselves to developing a shared vision with their leaders so that they may become allies in the struggle for student success. These alliances fortify change by creating a point of contact between administrators and students. The MSG team has developed such relationships. The Montclair Public Schools Director of Curriculum, Alexis R. Colander, also serves as MSG director. Members of the MSG team work directly with other key personnel of the central administration on curriculum and special services for students. Over the tenure of

the grant, rapport with administrators has evolved to mentorship—trust has been established and expectations have been raised.

**Professional research based industries*

The MSG team is in a unique position to have the time, space and flexibility to interface directly with representatives from corporate entities. As part of a summer enrichment program (Project ACE), Renee Shahid (humanities specialist) along with classroom teachers developed a curriculum that allowed students to develop business plans for their own fictitious companies. The students visited different businesses, researched marketing strategies and conducted a business fair showcasing their "businesses". Additionally, district initiatives to address the goals of improved perception, fiscal stability and student achievement have created opportunities for the MSG teachers to interact as planners/strategists/allies with corporate partners.

Conclusion

The Middle School Federal Magnet Grant has allowed the Montclair Public Schools to uncover teachers as an untapped resource of quality professional development. As middle level education faces a paradigm shift appropriate for the twenty-first century, the means to maximize the potential of teachers must be explored.

Works Consulted

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Sample Flyers

Teacher Study Group Series
Brain Compatible Teaching and Learning

- Cognitive systems
- Learning models
- Memory
- Emotional intelligence
- Multiple intelligences

- Learned helplessness
- Nutrition
- States
- Mind maps
- Brain theory

- *Group discussion of Teaching with the Brain in Mind* (book supplied to each participant)
- Idea exchange to support brain-compatible learning environments
- Discover strategies to promote optimal learning

Four Dinner-Circle™ Meetings:
October 19th, November 16th, January 11th and February 15th

Location
Montclair High School Teachers' Cafeteria
Midland Avenue Entrance, then left to end of hall
Dinner served at 4:30pm
Discussion: 5:00pm to 7:00pm

R.S.V.P. by Friday, October 13:

Middle School Magnet Grant
MSGrant@montclair.k12.nj.us
509.6409

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Department of Instruction

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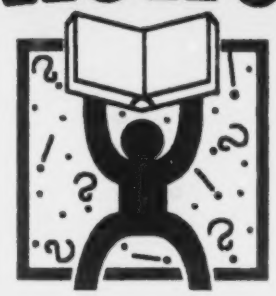

Middle School Grant Dinner Circle Study Group

The Fragile Brain and Learning Differences

Identifying Learning Impediments and Raising Student Achievement in Regular Education Classrooms

Three-part Series
6 PD hours for full participation
Dinner provided 4:30 - 5pm MHS Teachers' Cafe
January 25, March 15, April 26 5 - 7pm
RSVP Magnet Grant Office X6409
Deadline Friday, December 1

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* Hear Cultural Skylore
* Bring Binoculars
* Explore Astronomy & Technology

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Thursday
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hosted at

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Glenfield Middle School
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Montclair NJ 07042

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Planetarium@montclair.k12.nj.us

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Flex your mental muscles and come out to join us!

- All scheduled 4-day workshops underwritten by the Middle School Magnet Grant will now be 3-day intensives at the hourly rate.
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- Professional resources provided for all participants.
- *Writing on the Same Page* (Advanced Writer's Room Coach Training underwritten by an independent Writer's Room grant) will remain a 4-day workshop--Monday through Thursday.

ATTN: ALL TEACHERS Grades 3 through 5

Do you teach Elementary-level Math?
Do you teach Elementary-level Language Arts?
Do you teach Elementary-level Science?
Do you have questions about the upcoming ESPA?
Are you new to Grade 4 Instruction?

If you said
YES
to any of these questions...

Come out and join us for

The ABCs of the ESPA: A Dialogue Among Teachers

General Overview	March 22nd at MHS Teachers' Cafeteria
Math Overview	March 29th at MPL Auditorium
Language Arts Overview	March 30th at MPL Auditorium
Science Overview	April 12th at MHS Teachers' Cafeteria

BENEFITS:

Compensation options (In-service or Monetary at Hourly Rate)
Professional exchange
Insight into Upcoming Administration
Strategies for Test Preparation

Sessions will commence from 3:30pm to 5:00pm.
Please **RSVP to MAGNET GRANT OFFICE at least three days in advance**

Telephone 509-6409
Facsimile 509-6411
Email MSGrant@montclair.k12.nj.us

Montclair Public Schools
present

Dialogue Among Educators: "The ABCs of the ESPA"

Four Exciting Days of Workshops

3:30pm to 5:00pm
Light refreshments served

∫ General Overview--March 15, 2000

Grade 3 & Teachers New to Grade 4
Montclair High School Teacher's Cafeteria

∫ Mathematics--March 29, 2000

Grade 3 & 4 Teachers of Math
Montclair Public Library Auditorium

∫ Language Arts--March 30, 2000

Grade 3 & 4 Teachers of Language Arts
Montclair Public Library Auditorium

∫ Science--April 12, 2000

Grade 3 & 4 Teachers of Science
Montclair Public Library Auditorium

(Detach here for interoffice mail or fax)

Please RSVP to Dept. of Instruction

email: nfrasier@montclair.k12.nj.us
telephone: 973/509.6409
fax: 973/509.6411

*Name*_____
*School*_____
*Grade*_____
*Subject(s) taught*_____
*email address*_____

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Renee Shahid at the Middle School Grant Office
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OR
Send Your Completed Application to 22 Valley Road, Attention: Dr. Jeanne Pryor

Calling All Teachers
Grade 5-9

FREE

Professional Dinner Circle

sponsored by the
Middle School Magnet Grant

Conversations about

Writing Across the Curriculum & Open~Ended

February 10th

Bring:
*Sample student responses
*Sample open-ended questions
*Discuss applications to NJCCCS & GEPA test specifications

Best Practices

February 17th

Bring:
*Bright ideas
*Sample lessons
*Sample student work
*Professional exchange

Light Dinner *starting at 4:30pm* **Dialogue** *starting at 5:00pm*
Montclair High School Teacher's Cafeteria

Please respond to Middle School Magnet Grant Office (Mt. Hebron) or call x6409

____*February 10th: Writing Across the Curriculum/Open~Ended Q's, Please RSVP by 02/03/00*
____*February 17th: Best Practices, Please RSVP by 02/10/00*

Writing On The Same Page

A Summer Professional Development Workshop

Workshop To Include:

Writing Across the Curriculum
Working with Rubrics
Answering Open-ended Questions
Evaluating Student Writing
Revision Methods That Work
Advanced Coach Training

Learn How To:

Strengthen collaboration with writing coaches

Maximize coach support in the classroom

Reading maketh a full man, conference a ready man, and writing an exact man.
-Francis Bacon

Date: Monday-Thursday, June 26-29th

Time: 12:30p-3:30p

Location: Ellen Kolba's House
346 Park Street

Refreshments will be served

Please feel free to bring student writing samples and your ideas

Presented by:
Sheila Crowell, Ellen Kolba and The Middle School Magnet Grant

R.A.S.E.

Raising A Student of Excellence: A Look at Assessment

The First in a Series of
Parent Workshops for Family Empowerment

- Elementary School Proficiency Assessment (ESPA)
- Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment (GEPA)
- Terra Nova, recently adopted district-wide standardized test
- Interpreting scores: past to present

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Montclair Public Schools

Lead facilitator: Dr. Alexis R. Colander, Director of Curriculum K-12

Monday, October 23rd 2000
Montclair Public Library, Main branch
N. Fullerton Ave.
7:00pm to 8:30pm

For more information please call
Middle School Magnet Grant Office
973/509.6409
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*Professional*Dinner*Circle

Calling All Teachers
Grade 5 to 9

Please join the **MIDDLE SCHOOL MAGNET GRANT RESOURCE TEAM** for

AFTER THE GEPA

WHAT DID WE LEARN?
WHAT DO WE DO NEXT?

Tuesday, March 21st
Montclair High School
Teachers' Cafeteria
Light dinner served 5:00pm
Professional conversation 5:30pm – 7:00pm

RSVP to MAGNET GRANT OFFICE by **Friday, March 17th**
Telephone: 509-6409
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BRIGHT IDEAS

Please park on Midland Avenue

Compensation Options

- Monetary at hourly rate
- In-service credit

The Middle School Magnet Grant staff
presents
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Please join us for

✓ Light supper

✓ Sharing of your best practices

(Bring a dozen copies of a lesson plan or activity to share.)

Thursday, May 4

4:30 - 7:00 PM

Montclair High Library

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by Thursday, April 27, 2000

Choose: ✓ In-service credit ✓ Pay at hourly rate

NMSA Presentation

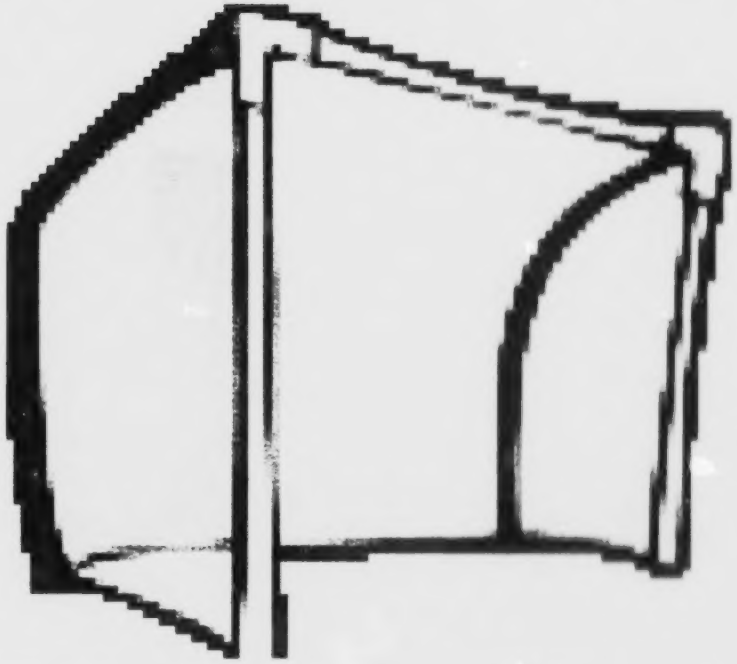
Teachers as Staff Developers

National Middle School 2000 Association Annual Meeting

Montclair Public Schools

Montclair, NJ 07042

Teachers as Staff Developers



Goal: to provide a holistic view of MSG model of staff development

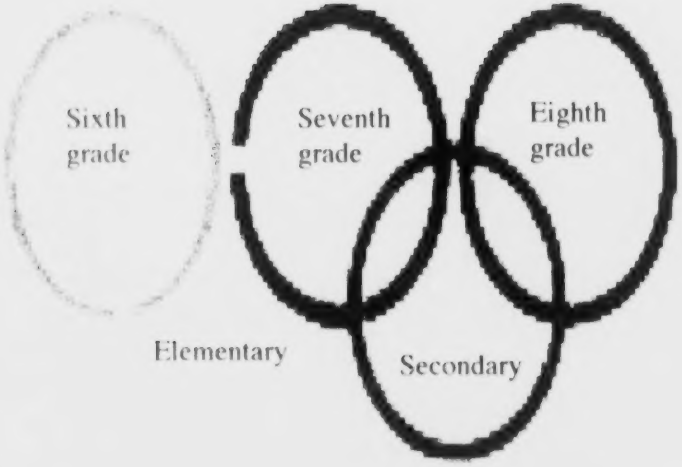
Agenda

- Introductions & Background
- Model workshop
- Description of MSG structure
- Problems & stumbling blocks
- Identifying resources
- Question & Answers

Montclair Public Schools
Montclair, NJ

- Located 12 miles west of New York City.
- 6,000+ students in
  - 1 high school
  - 3 middle schools (6 - 8)
  - 7 elementary schools (K - 5; K is full day)
  - Developmental Learning Center for 4- to 12-year-olds with multiple handicaps
  - 1 semi-private pre-K center (3 & 4-year-olds; full day)
- Richly diverse community and student population
- Elementary and middle schools are all magnet schools with parental choice
- Magnet schools since 1977
- Most classified students in regular education classrooms with in-class support
- Average class size: 26 students
- Each elementary class has a part-time teaching assistant
- Significant family involvement
- Site-based management

MIDDLE SCHOOL in MONTCLAIR



Three Middle Schools

- Glenfield Middle School
  - Arts & Humanities Magnet
  - Performing arts theme
- Mt. Hebron Middle School
  - Science/Technology Magnet
  - Environmental theme
- Renaissance Middle School
  - Lotus-model Magnet
  - World as the community for a community of learners

The Middle School Magnet Grant

- Federal Magnet Schools Assistance Program - U.S. Department of Education

- 3-year grant for a total of $1.5 million

- Focus is on improving the performance of middle school students, strengthening the instructional practices of teachers, refining the magnet themes, and enhancing the overall quality of instruction.

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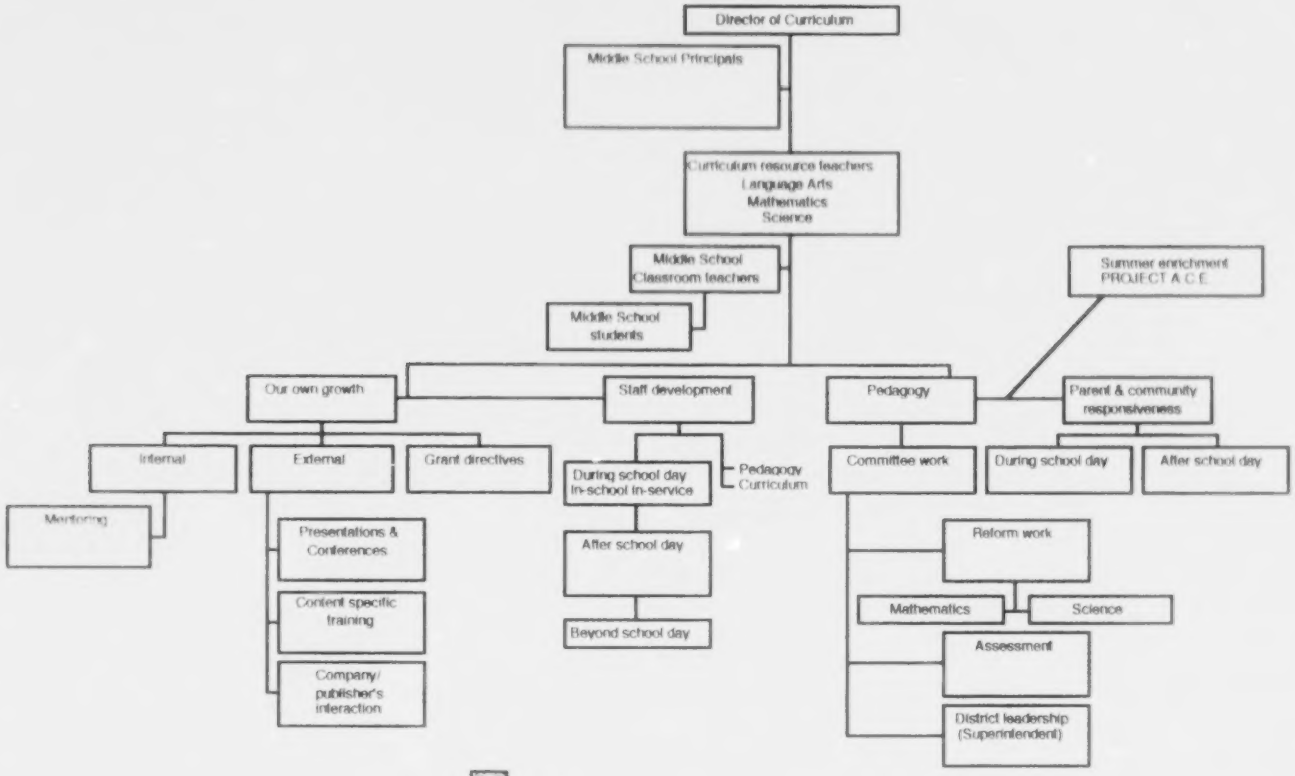
Schematic of Responsibilities



Teacher Empowerment ---> Student Achievement

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WE ARE FAMILY

HARVESTING THE WISDOM

- *Collective brainpower*
- *Quality circles*
- *Collaboration and camaraderie*
- *Footprinting*

TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE

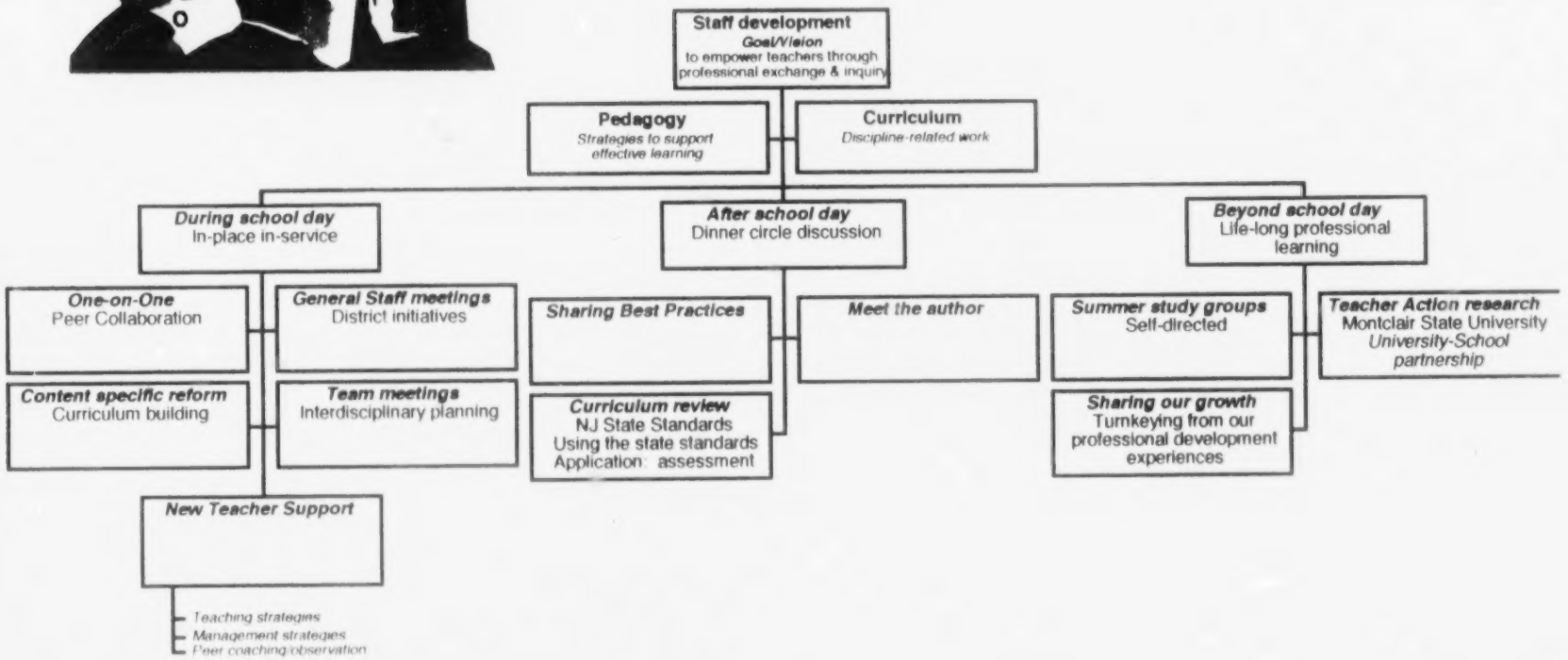
The unplanned is an opportunity in disguise.

- The teacher's lounge
- Support events
- Identify strengths and interests
- Share/turnkey information
- Offer incentives

WHAT'S IN AN ICEBREAKER?

- Seize the moment
- Know the art of communication
- Be flexible
- Accentuate the positive
- Be a cheerleader for your colleagues
- One-on-one
- Team/house meetings

STAFF DEVELOPMENT



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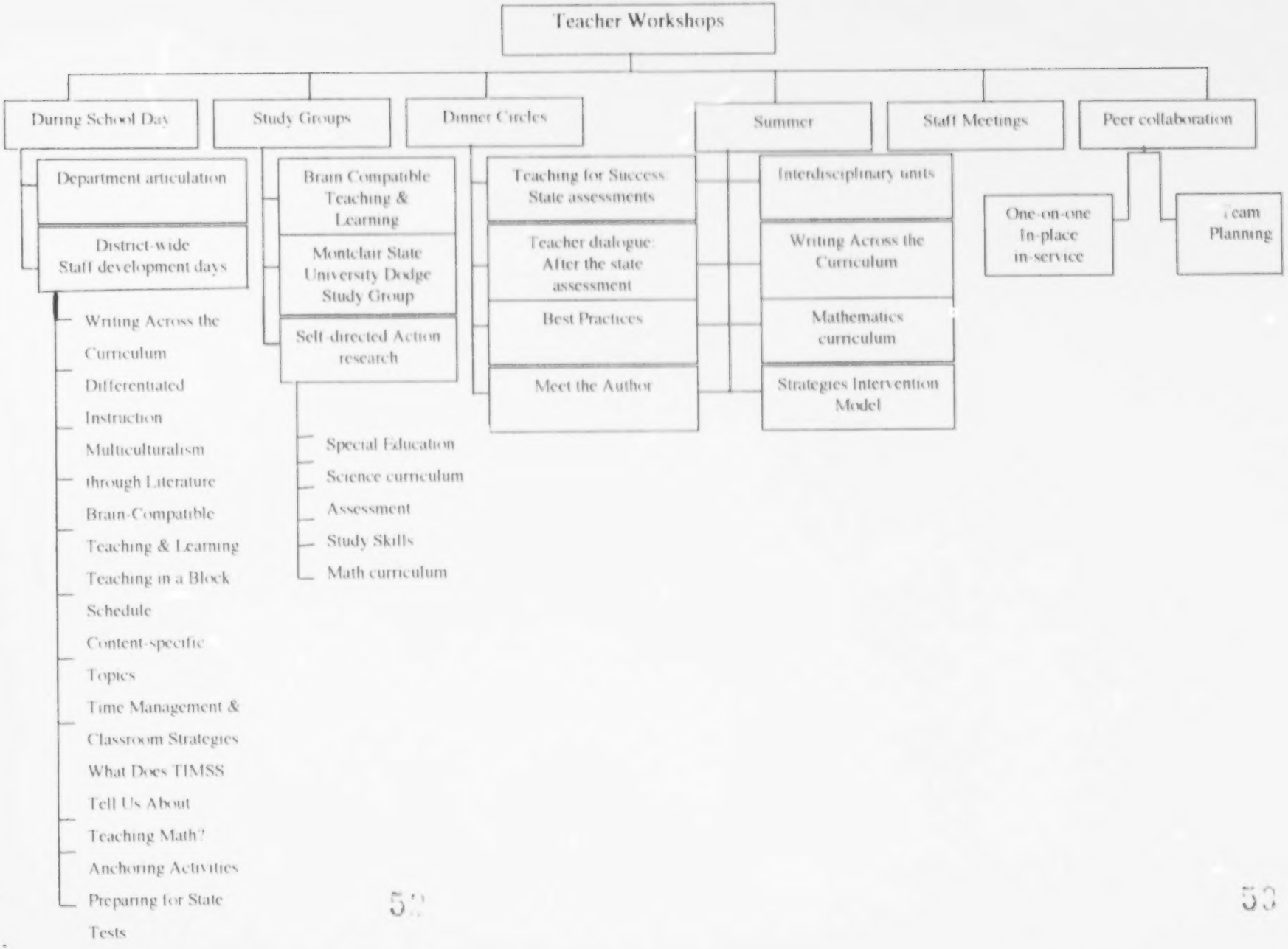
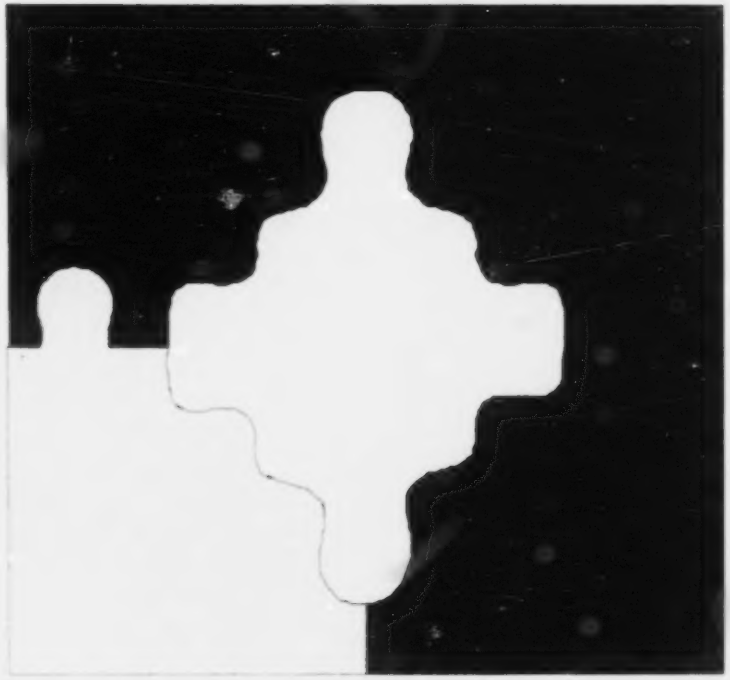
Stages of Staff Development

- **Initiating change**
  - ✓ Structured Workshops
  - ✓ Study Groups
  - ✓ Informal conversations
- **Nurturing change**
  - ✓ Working in classrooms
  - ✓ After/before school conferences
  - ✓ Research & added support for teachers
- **Reaping the benefits of change**
  - ✓ Teachers initiating new projects
  - ✓ Teachers supporting other teachers

Staff Development Workshops



MODEL Workshop AGENDA



- ⌘ Anchor Activity
- ⌘ Content/feedback loop
- ⌘ Pedagogical technique
- ⌘ Closing
- ⌘ Evaluation/feedback ✓

RATIONALE for ANCHORING ACTIVITES

- ❖ Creating an anticipatory set
- ❖ Assessing prior knowledge
- ❖ Checking for understanding
- ❖ Reviewing content-based vocabulary
- ❖ Logical sequencing of concepts

COMMITTEE WORK

Curriculum Reform

- Mathematics
- Science
- Language Arts (in conjunction with Gail Robinson, Teacher on Special Assignment)

Superintendent (administrative) Initiatives

- Assessment
- Standardized test review
- District Leadership
- Student Achievement especially among African Americans
- Fiscal Stability
- Improved Community Perception of the Public Schools

HOW DO YOU KEEP PROBLEMS FROM EXPLODING? EMPOWER PARENTS & TEACHERS AS CHANGE AGENTS!

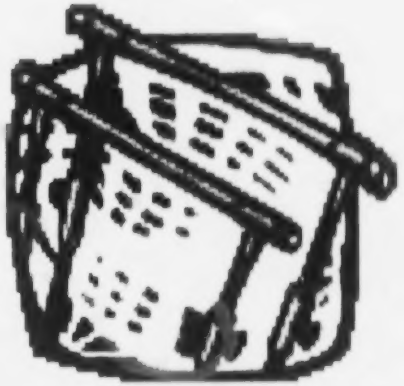
PARENT & COMMUNITY RESPONSIVENESS

- ☺ School Review (PTA) Meetings
- ☺ Parent Workshops
  - ➢ Math Curriculum
  - ➢ Science Curriculum
  - ➢ Standardized Testing Program
  - ➢ Special Curriculum Issues
- ☺ Community volunteers
  - ➢ Writer's Room Coaching
  - ➢ Standardized test preparation
  - ➢ Community tutorial program
- ☺ Community events
- ☺ Assessment Committee participation
- ☺ Minority Achievement Committee Participation
- ☺ **Project ACE: Summer Enrichment collaborative**

Parents & Teachers Winning Together

Critical phases in the process...

- Overcoming teacher isolationist behavior
- Motivating teachers near the end of their careers
- Teacher-principal-teacher dynamics
- Establishing new roles with parents & teachers



HURDLES*HOOPS*
CHALLENGES

Change is a TEACH-ABLE moment!

OUR OWN GROWTH

Internal	External	Grant *(Inspired)* Directives	Mentoring
Technology	Interaction with publishing companies	Grant evaluation process	Administrative: Dr. A. Colander, Director of Curriculum
Peer-collaboration within team	Content-specific training	Peer feedback	Administrative: MS Principals
Peer-collaboration with teachers	Pedagogical & Curriculum Strategies *Example: Brain Compatible Learning; Differentiated Instruction; SEED Training*	Grant writing	Networking with Professionals in research-based industries
District support system *Example: Volunteer structure (e.g., Writer's Room); Montclair Fund for Educational Excellence; Board of Education in-service*	Professional Association Membership	Federal Magnet Grant Conference	Networking with colleagues from other disciplines and locations

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TEACHER EMPOWERMENT

There is a marketing element to EVERYTHING.

- Establishing professional libraries
- Offering professional credit
- Cultivating professionalism
- Rewards and incentives

Additional Resources

Books

Atwell, Nancie. *In the Middle: New Understandings About Writing, Reading, and Learning, 2nd ed.* Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook Publishers, Inc. 1998.

Barrell, John. *Teaching for Thoughtfulness*. White Plains, NY: Longman. 1995.

Brandt, Ronald S., ed. *Education in a New Era: ASCD Yearbook 2000*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD, 2000.

Brooks, Jacqueline Grennon and Martin G. Brooks. *In Search of Understanding: The Case for Constructivist Classrooms*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD. 1993, 1999.

Canady, Robert Lynn and Michael D. Retting. *Teaching in the Block: Strategies for Engaging Active Learners*. Larchmont, NY: Eye On Education. 1999.

Cohen, Jonathan, ed. *Educating Minds and Hearts: Social Emotional Learning and the Passage into Adolescence*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD. 1999.

Cole, Robert W., ed. *Educating Everybody's Children: Diverse Teaching Strategies for Diverse Learners, What Research and Practice Say About Improving Achievement*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD. 1995.

Countryman, Joan. *Writing to Learn Mathematics*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. 1992.

Danielson, Charlotte. *Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD. 1996.

Elias, Maurice J., et. al. *Promoting Social and Emotional Learning: Guidelines for Educators*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD. 1997.

Fullan, Michael. *Change Forces: Probing the Depths of Educational Reform*. London: Falmer Press. 1993.

Heard, Georgia. *For the Good of the Earth and Sun: Teaching Poetry*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. 1989.

Jensen, Eric. *Brain-Based Learning, revised*. San Diego, CA: The Brain Store. 2000.

_____. *Brain-Compatible Strategies*. San Diego, CA: The Brain Store. 1999.

_____. *Teaching with the Brain in Mind*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD. 1998.

Johnson, David W. and Roger T. Johnson. *Learning Together and Alone: Cooperative, Competitive, and Individualistic Learning, 5th ed.* New York: Allyn and Bacon. 1998.

Joyce, Bruce, ed. *Changing School Culture Through Staff Development: 1990 Yearbook of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.* Alexandria, VA: ASCD, 1990.

Nelson, Cathy L. and Kim A. Wilson, ed. *Seeding the Process of Multicultural Education.* Plymouth, MN: Minnesota Inclusiveness Program. 1998.

Reissman, Rose. *The Evolving Multicultural Classroom.* Alexandria, VA: ASCD. 1994.

Schmoker, Mike. *Results: The Key to Continuous School Improvement, 2nd ed.* Alexandria, VA: ASCD. 1999.

Sprenger, Marilee. *Learning & Memory: The Brain in Action.* Alexandria, VA: ASCD. 1999.

Tomlinson, Carol Ann. *The Differentiated Classroom: Responding to the Needs of All Learners.* Alexandria, VA: ASCD. 1999.

White, Merry. *Japanese Educational Challenge: A Commitment to Children.* New York: Free Press. 1987.

Zemelman, Steven, et. al. *Best Practice: New Standards for Teaching and Learning in America's Schools.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. 1998.

Periodicals and Journal Articles

Educational Leadership. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

ENC *Focus: A Magazine for Classroom Innovators.* Columbus, OH: Eisenhower National Clearinghouse. [This is a free periodical; also available at enc.org.]

ENC *Focus.* "Making Schools Work for Every Child," Vol. 7, No. 4., 2000.

Ferguson, Ronald F. "Cultivating New Routines that Foster High Achievement for All Students." Unpublished draft. Cambridge, MA: John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. 2000.

Harvard Ed Letter. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Graduate School of Education. [Summaries and features from the *Harvard Educational Review.*]

Harvard Educational Review. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Graduate School of Education.

Middle Ground: The Magazine of Middle Level Education. Westerville, OH: NMSA.

Parks, Jerry L. "If I'd Only Known Then ...: Seven Critical Domains in which Every New Teacher Should Be Skilled in Order to Excel in the Middle School Classroom!"

Georgetown, KY: Jerry Parks, Georgetown Middle School. [Presented at NMSA National Conference, Oct. 1999.]

"Reaching the Top: A Report of the National Task Force on Minority High Achievement." New York: The College Board. 1999.

"Social, Emotional Learning." Montclair, NJ: Montclair Public Schools. July, 2000. [District Study Committee Report]

Video Instruction

Tomlinson, Carol Ann and Leslie J. Kiernan. *Differentiating Instruction: Facilitator's Guide and Videotapes*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD. 1997.

Web Resources

www.ascd.org/readingroom/edlead/9303/fullan.htm "Why Teachers Must Become Change Agents."

www.fen.com [Family Education Network: resources for families and teachers; classroom website hosting--My School Online]

www.howtolearn.com [Personal learning style inventory]

www.kidsource.com/kidsource.content/diff_instruction.html [Differentiated instruction description]

www.phschool.com/profdev/aa [Rubrics for cooperative learning, oral presentation, projects, maps, time lines]

www.quasar.ualberta.ca/ddc/include/scimod.html [Differentiated lesson plans]

Supplementary Resources

31. Over the last twelve months, how often have you attended professional development activities within the district?
    a) Once b) Twice c) Three times d) Four times or more
32. Over the last twelve months, how often have you attended professional development activities outside of the district?
    a) Once b) Twice c) Three times d) Four times or more

We are often asked to give grades to our students. Please assign grades to the following:

A: A (Excellent) B: B (Good) C: C (Fair) D: D (Poor)

33. Quality of teachers in your school.
34. Textbooks
35. Teaching materials other than textbooks
36. School facilities and equipment
37. Parent involvement
38. Racial integration of students in class

In general, how do you feel about these things that relate to students in your building:

A: Strongly agree B: Agree C: Disagree D: Strongly disagree

39. Students really want to do well in school.
40. Students make friends with students of other racial and ethnic groups.
41. Friends often work together in class.
42. Students are treated fairly by the adults in your school.
43. In class, students try to help one another learn.
44. Outside of class, students try to help one another learn.
45. Students feel free to express their ideas and opinions in class, even when their idea/opinion is not "popular."
46. Students demonstrate their understanding of computers/technology.
47. Students are willing to explain/justify their answers/ideas in class.
48. In my class/house, teachers give assignments that require students to work on their own (independent work) in class.
49. In my class/house, teachers give assignments that require students to work with at least one partner in class.
50. In my class/house, teachers give assignments that require students to work with at least one partner outside of class.
51. Student opinion is respected in this school.
52. Students respect the work of other students.

Middle School Magnet Grant Teacher Survey

Please respond to the following statements by indicating
A: Strongly Agree B: Agree C: Disagree D: Strongly Disagree

I have the ability to try new teaching methods/techniques:

1. ...in a staff development/training context.
2. ...in the classroom.
3. ...with enough opportunities to discuss them sufficiently.
4. ...with sufficient technical support and follow up.
5. I receive sufficient professional development during the academic year.
6. I receive sufficient professional development during the summer.
7. I have common planning time with team/house members.

I prefer professional development activities that:

8. ...occur during the summer
9. ...occur during the academic year
10. ...are collegial working/study groups
11. ...allow me to conduct action research
12. ...allow me to share teaching strategies with other teachers

13. My principal is aware of my professional development needs.
14. My principal is supportive of my professional development needs.
15. I use Differentiated Instruction theory when planning lessons.
16. I teach reading strategies in my content area.
17. I teach writing strategies in my content area.
18. I use the NJ Core Curriculum Content Standards when planning lessons.
19. I use NJ Core Curriculum Content Standards in more than one subject when I plan lessons.
20. It is necessary to use teaching materials other than textbooks.
21. I use performance-based assessments.
22. I develop rubrics in the assessment/evaluation of my students.
23. I develop units of instruction that are interdisciplinary.
24. I develop lessons that utilize collaborative/cooperative learning strategies.
25. I allow my students to work with me to develop assessment rubrics.

Indicate how familiar you are with each of the following concepts:
A: Very familiar B: Familiar C: Somewhat familiar D: Unfamiliar

26. Thematic planning: integrated multi-disciplinary studies that last more than a few days and are based on a common topic/theme
27. Cooperative learning: structured collaborative groupings with individual role assignments for members within a working group
28. Differentiated learning: student groupings according to individual needs, interest, readiness resulting in performance that exceeds expectations
29. Portfolio assessment: structured use of specific samples of student work to assess progress over time
30. National curriculum standards within your subject area (e.g., NSTA, NCTM, NCTE)

Middle School Magnet Grant 1999-2000 Survey References

PLEASE NOTE THAT ALL OF THE REFERENCES,
WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE GALLUP POLL, ARE
ERIC DOCUMENTS.

Gallup, G. (1994) *Gallup Poll of Public Opinion*, "Teenager Survey, 1993" Scholarly Resources Inc. Wilmington, DE: 255 – 263.

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Cheng, M. and Yau, M. (1999). "Every secondary student survey". ERIC, ED432600.

Dannis, J. et al. (1996). "Lessons in school reform: An evaluation of a university-operated charter middle school". ERIC, ED427057.

Levine, E.Z. and Orenstein, F.M. (1994). "Sugar and spice and puppy dog tails: gender equity among middle school children". ERIC, ED389457.

Marks, Helen M. et al. (1996) "Social support for achievement: Building intellectual culture in restructuring schools". ERIC, ED412636.

Miller, C.A. (1995) "Improving motivation in 8th grade students". ERIC, ED394099.

Morris, L. (1998). "The effects of integrated curriculum on 9th grade at-risk students". ERIC, ED422419.

Petty, P. (1997). "Increasing student engagement and retention through the use of cooperative groups and authentic assessment". ERIC, ED411058

Williamson, R. and Johnston, J. H. (1991). "Planning for success: successful implementation of middle level reorganization". ERIC, ED329004.

Montclair Middle School Magnet Grant Evaluation Sheet

Workshop:_____
Instructor:_____
Date:_____

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. Was this workshop well organized?	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Was the objective clearly identified?	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Was the subject matter clearly presented?	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Were the activities supportive of the workshop objective?	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. Were the materials relevant to the objective?	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. Was the trainer responsive to the participants?	☐	☐	☐	☐

7. Which aspects of the workshop did you like best?

_____
_____
_____
_____

8. From this workshop I plan to use the following

_____
_____
_____
_____

9. The ideas and activities discussed in this workshop will be shared through

_____
_____
_____
_____

(Please put additional comments on back)

Created by Middle School Magnet Grant

Comments: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you for your participation in this workshop.

Optional:

Name: _____

School: _____

Montclair Middle School Magnet Grant Evaluation Sheet
Summary Form

Workshop: _____

Date: _____

	Agree Strongly 1	Agree 2	Disagree 3	Disagree Strongly 4	N/A	Mean (1–4)
1 The workshop was well organized						
2 The objectives were clearly identified						
3 The subject matter was clearly presented						
4 The activities supported the workshop objectives						
5 The handouts were relevant to the objectives						
6 The trainer was responsive to participants						
				MEAN TOTAL		

7 Aspects of the workshop that I liked best include:

_____

_____

_____

8 From this workshop, I plan to use:

_____

_____

_____

9 Ideas and activities discussed in this workshop will be shared in our district through

_____Department Meetings	_____Faculty Meetings
_____Classroom Demonstration	_____In-service
_____Reproduction and Dissemination of Materials	_____Other
_____Informal Meetings	_____N/A

10 Additional Comments. (below)

Montclair Middle School Magnet Grant Evaluation Sheet

Workshop:_____
Instructor:_____
Date:_____

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. Was this workshop well organized?	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Was the objective clearly identified?	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Was the subject matter clearly presented?	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Were the activities supportive of the workshop objective?	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. Were the materials relevant to the objective?	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. Was the trainer responsive to the participants?	☐	☐	☐	☐

7. Which aspects of the workshop did you like best?

_____
_____
_____
_____

8. From this workshop I plan to use the following

_____
_____
_____
_____

9. The ideas and activities discussed in this workshop will be shared through

_____
_____
_____
_____

(Please put additional comments on back)

Created by Middle School Magnet Grant

Comments:_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you for your participation in this workshop.

Optional:

Name:_____

School:_____

Montclair Middle School Magnet Grant Evaluation Sheet
Summary Form

Workshop:_____

Date:_____

	Agree Strongly 1	Agree 2	Disagree 3	Disagree Strongly 4	N/A	Mean (1-4)
1. The workshop was well organized.	_____	_____	_____	_____	____	____
2. The objectives were clearly identified.	_____	_____	_____	_____	____	____
3. The subject matter was clearly presented.	_____	_____	_____	_____	____	____
4. The activities supported the workshop objectives.	_____	_____	_____	_____	____	____
5. The handouts were relevant to the objectives.	_____	_____	_____	_____	____	____
6. The trainer was responsive to participants.	_____	_____	_____	_____	____	____
				MEAN TOTAL		

7. Aspects of the workshop that I liked best include:

_____ _____

_____

_____

8. From this workshop, I plan to use:

_____

_____

_____

9. Ideas and activities discussed in this workshop will be shared in our district through

_____Department Meetings	_____Faculty Meetings
_____Classroom Demonstration	_____In-service
_____Reproduction and Dissemination of Materials	_____Other
_____Informal Meetings	_____N/A

10. Additional Comments (below)